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SUBJECT: ITALY SEES NK UNSCR POSSIBLE PRELUDE TO UNSC
CONSENSUS ON IRAN

REF: ROME 2872

Classified By: Political M/C David D. Pearce, for reasons 1.4 (a) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Senator Gordon Smith met with MFA Political Affairs Director General Terzi October 16. The Italians noted the UNSCR on North Korea, though not as robust as ideally desired, left hope the UNSC might reach similar consensus on Iran. Terzi stressed the goal of UNSC action must be to bring Iran back to the negotiating table, while at the same time showing Iran the UN is serious. Terzi said Italy was increasing economic pressure on Iran, even without a formal sanctions regime in place, and cooperating closely with the U.S. on preventing the sale of dual-use technology. The Senator noted the momentum in Congress towards sanctions legislation, and expressed understanding for the impact on the Italian economy sanctions might have, but noted they are preferable to military conflict. Terzi raised Italy's firm commitment in Lebanon and its hope that UNIFIL can set the stage for re-launching the MEPP. He said Italy sought to do more security training through NATO in Iraq and to strengthen its PRT in Afghanistan. END SUMMARY

Italy Hopes for Movement on MEPP

12. (C) Terzi began the meeting with a discussion of Lebanon. He pointed out the foundations for UNSCR 1701 were laid at the Rome Conference with the input of all the major players, and that the Italian government was committed to seeing its successful implementation. Terzi commented on Italy's role in getting other EU partners, specifically the French and Germans, involved.

13. (C) Terzi emphasized the importance of UNIFIL in providing at least a minimal level of security, necessary for reconstruction and reinforcing the democratic government of PM Siniora. He observed that without stability in Lebanon, the region risks being overrun with the destabilizing influences of Syria and Iran.

14. (C) Terzi expressed hope that the international community's involvement in Lebanon could lead to renewed efforts to resolve the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Terzi referenced a September 28 letter from FM

D'Alema to the Secretary suggesting one possibility for next steps might be for the Quartet to convene an expanded meeting to include major European players and major regional players such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to support Abu Mazen. He said Italy saw the prospect of a Palestinian national unity government as a possibility, but noted Abu Mazen needs continued encouragement from the international community.

Afghanistan - Italy wants to do More

¶15. (C) On Afghanistan, Terzi insisted Italy's commitment remains unchanged, and that Italy is trying to increase its role in Institution Building and Rule of Law programs and the war on drugs; and to further develop the mission of its PRT.

IRAQ - A Possible Expanded Role for Italy Through NTM-I

¶16. (C) Terzi underscored Italy's continued commitment to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq and indicated Italy was potentially willing to expand its role in Iraq through NATO.

IRAN/NORTH KOREA/SANCTIONS - A Top Priority for PM Prodi

¶17. (C) Terzi said non-proliferation was an absolute priority for the Prodi government. He noted that even though Italy is not in the inner circle, Italy plays a key role as a supporter of EU-Three initiatives both in Brussels and bi-laterally. Terzi expressed disappointment with the status of negotiations with Iran at the moment, but said it was still possible for the Iranian leadership to move towards a

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more constructive position. Terzi agreed now is the time for the UNSC to send a clear signal to Iran that the UNSC remains actively seized of the matter and intends to begin action under Chapter VII Article 4. Of course, sending such a signal also involves some risks, and it is of the utmost importance that the UN, in taking action, doesn't force Iran into a corner from which it cannot emerge without losing 'face.' Terzi stressed the goal of UNSC action must be to bring Iran back to the negotiating table, while at the same time showing Iran the UN is serious and will take action if Iran does not comply with IAEA requirements.

¶18. (S/NF) Terzi said Italy was increasing economic pressure on Iran, even without a formal sanctions regime in place, and cooperating closely with the U.S. on preventing the sale of dual-use technology to Iran. Terzi specifically referenced his October 13 meeting with Embassy Rome Econ Minister Counselor and said the Italian government had followed up with the companies in question (see Reftel), pointing out the companies might face exclusion from the American market if they export certain dual-use goods to Iran.

¶19. (C) The Italians noted the UNSCR on North Korea, though perhaps not as robust as ideally desired, set a great precedent and left hope that the UNSC might reach similar consensus on Iran.

¶110. (C) The Senator noted the momentum in Congress towards some type of sanctions legislation, stressing that the U.S. prefers to exhaust all diplomatic and economic options before resorting to military measures. He expressed understanding for the impact on the Italian economy that economic sanctions on Iran might have, but noted they are preferable to military conflict.

UN - Italy Cautiously Optimistic on UN Reform & Seeking a Seat on Human Rights Council

¶111. (C) Terzi noted that although some minor successes on UN Reform had been achieved, much remains to be done. He

expressed optimism at the fact that the new UNSYG comes from a management background and thus will hopefully continue to 'clean house.' Terzi added he was pleased that UNSC Reform had been tabled for the moment, and noted Italy is not currently seeking a permanent seat, nor does it support another seat for any EU country. Terzi explained that Italy's priority is to bring the EU to a point where it can express a common foreign policy and having any additional EU seats would only frustrate that goal. He added Italy would be putting itself forward as a candidate for the Human Rights Council next year.

¶12. (U) This cable was not cleared by CODEL Smith.
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